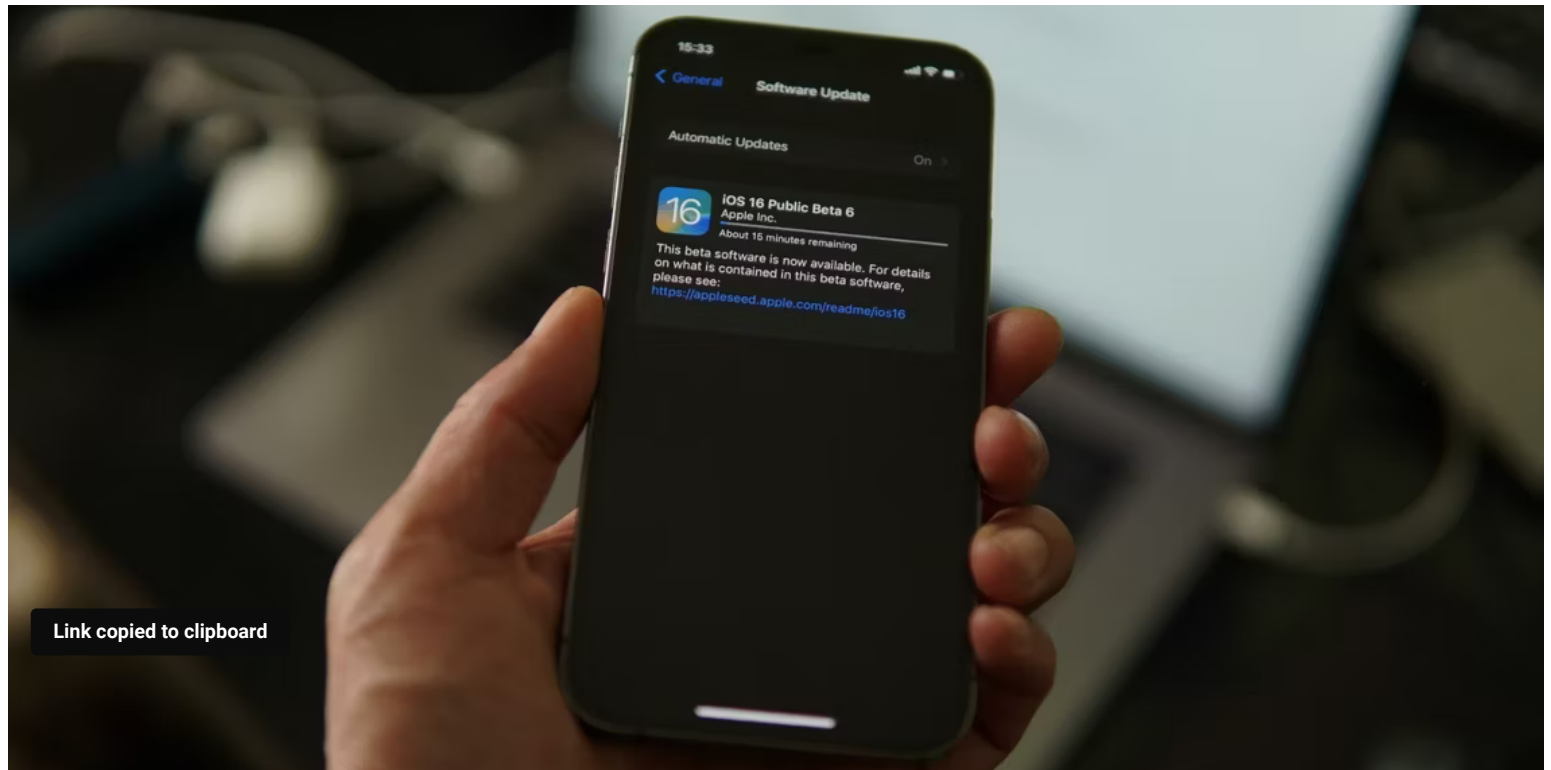


How to Download and Use Apple IPSW Files

Learn how to download, open, and use IPSW firmware files to update, restore, or downgrade your iPhone or iPad.

BY CHRISTIAN ZIBREG PUBLISHED DEC 21, 2022



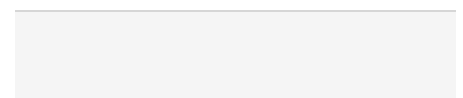
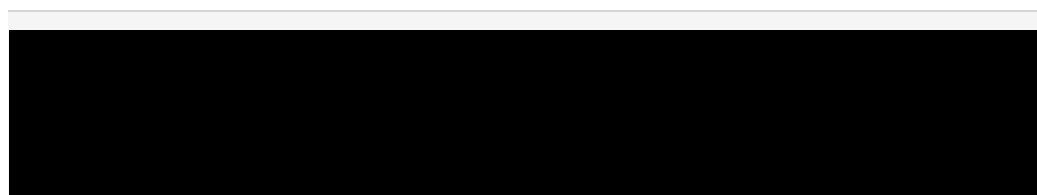
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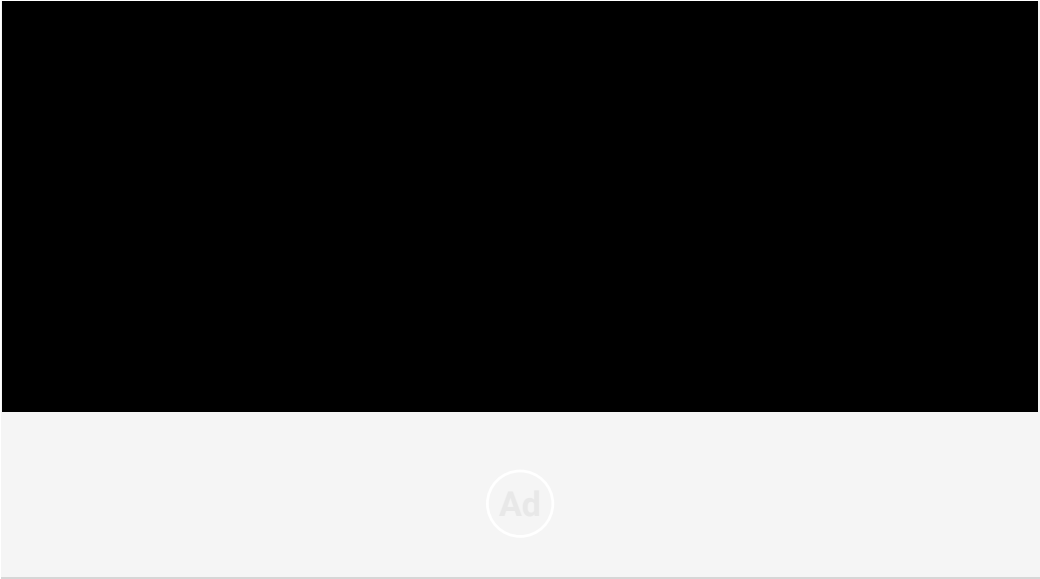
Your Apple device automatically downloads IPSW files when performing an update via the Finder, iTunes, or Software Update. These OS images are essential to the software update process, restoring your iPhone to default factory settings, etc.

You can manually manage, explore, and install IPSW files with third-party tools. Follow along with our tutorial to learn how IPSW files work, where to download them from and how to use IPSWs to update or downgrade the operating system software powering your Apple devices.

POLL

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What Are IPSW Files? What Are They Used For?

IPSW (short for iPhone Software) is Apple's proprietary file format for the package and delivery of iOS and iPadOS firmware updates.

Hosted on Apple's servers, IPSWs typically bring various enhancements, bug fixes, and security patches. These files are required to restore, update, or downgrade the software on the iPhone and iPad.

A folder in macOS Finder showing the contents of an extracted IPSW firmware archive

A file with a .ipsw extension is a renamed ZIP archive containing at least three encrypted volumes in the Apple Disk Image (DMG) file format, along with other installer files, property lists, the bootloader, baseband firmware, and so on.

One DMG holds the file system for a whole operating system. The remaining DMGs provide RAM disks for the restore and update processes.

How to Download iOS Firmware Update Files

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Not at all

Ad

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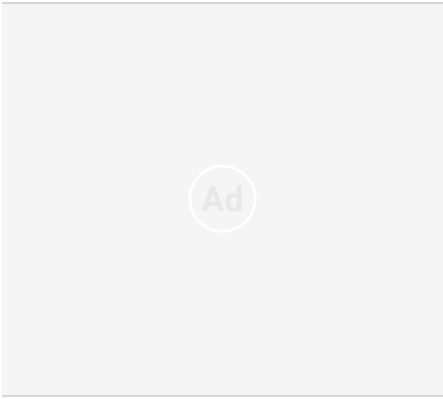
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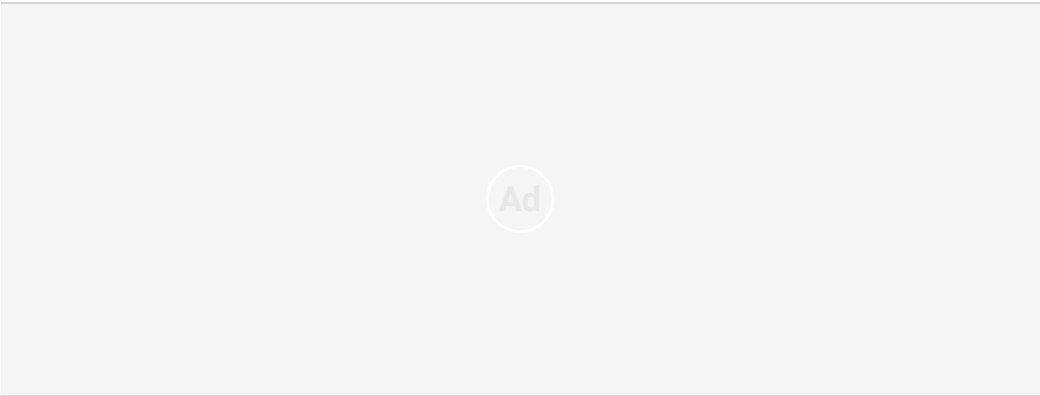
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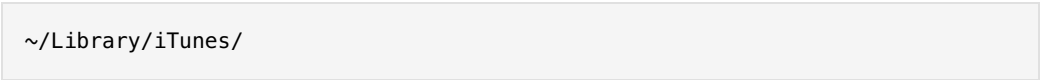
If automatic updates are enabled in Settings, your iPhone will fetch new IPSW files as soon as Apple pushes them live. Performing updates through iTunes or Finder will automatically download appropriate IPSW files into a special folder on your computer.



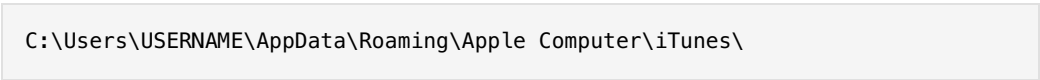
To access this download location on your Mac, click the **Finder** icon in the Dock, then press and hold **Command + Shift + G** on the keyboard or choose **Go to Folder** from the **Go** menu. On your PC, press **Windows + R**. Next, type the correct path for your OS version in the box (replace "USERNAME" with your Windows account name) and hit Enter:



macOS:



Windows:



You'll find one or more IPSW files in device-specific folders titled **iPhone Software Updates**, **iPad Software Updates**, or **iPod Software Updates**.

You cannot change the IPSW download location in iTunes.

Power users who want complete control over firmware files will want to download their IPSWs from specialized websites. Using your browser, visit one of the websites recommended in the next section and click the IPSW download link for the desired device and OS version.

The IPSW archive is saved in your computer's Downloads folder, so use Finder or File Explorer to explore its contents. You can safely rename the IPSW and trash, copy, or move it like any other file. Don't worry; deleting downloaded IPSWs won't damage your Apple device.

The Best Sites to Download iPhone IPSW Files

Downloading IPSW files from IPSW Downloads site

Folks who use automatic updates or the Software Update feature needn't worry about IPSWs. However, if you want to flash or downgrade your Apple device manually, you'll need to obtain the appropriate IPSW file for your hardware from one of the following websites:



- **IPSW Downloads**: The most comprehensive website for IPSW downloads because it provides links dating back to the original iPhone.

